

Guiding Principles of Homeland Security Studies

Background

Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8 describes to the Department's responsibility to establish Homeland Security preparedness training standards. HSPD 8 also details the Department's responsibility to encourage citizen participation in the Homeland Security preparedness effort. As such, the Homeland Security Advisory Council (HSAC) and its Academe, Policy and Research Senior Advisory Committee (APRSAC), in April 2004, expressed support for the Department's effort, coordinated by the Coast Guard Academy, to bring together stakeholders from across the country to weigh-in on national homeland security education and training needs. Similarly, the Department of Homeland Security recognized the need to support America's schools, universities and colleges in their effort to establish homeland security studies programs and curricula.

In November 2004, a coalition of Homeland Security stakeholders and experts from government, non-profit, private and academic organizations convened at the Coast Guard Academy for a three-day Homeland Security Strategic Studies Conference. The participants reviewed education and training needs for the national homeland security educational effort. These experts established a voluntary foundation to assist schools, colleges and universities in their attempt to launch and develop homeland security studies programs. The foundation was entitled Guiding Principles in Homeland Security Studies.

These principles reflect voluntary minimum standards for all education and training programs. Furthermore, they were established to marshal resources of our nation's schools, colleges and universities to better utilize citizen participation in securing the homeland and to serve as a guide for the training of Homeland Security officials.

Guiding Principles

Principle 1: Align with Homeland Security and National Strategy: Homeland Security Educational Programs must be congruent with the Homeland Security Strategic Plan and National Strategy. All curricula must continuously adapt to the changing nature of the security environment and the strategies that arise to deal with emerging threats. Thus, Homeland Security curricula should encourage partnering, coalition-building and collaborative arrangements to enhance the alignment of efforts while preserving personal freedoms for all Americans.

Principle 2: Encompass Interdisciplinary and Global Perspectives: All Homeland Security programs must be interdisciplinary in nature and acknowledge the global scope of the endeavor. Programs must be grounded in a systemic understanding of the strategy, operations and tactics needed to achieve objectives associated with prevention, protection, detection, disruption, response, economic stabilization and recovery. Programs must emphasize how strategy and policy guide decision-making, risk mitigation and threat management.

Principle 3: Employ Solid Pedagogical Foundations: Homeland Security studies should be based on solid proven methods and grounded in learning theory. Programs should be research-based, built on experiential learning principles and validated prior to initiation.

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Principle 4: Emphasize Integration: All Homeland Security studies should be integrated vertically and horizontally using the DHS lexicon to bridge communication across different sectors, disciplines and cultures. Similarly, educational institutions and other program delivery entities must engage in the coordination, communication and collaboration activities that are essential if there is to be a comprehensive system of programs that meets national needs.

Principle 5: Meet Multiple Stakeholder Needs: Programs must prepare leadership across public and private sectors to formulate and execute strategies in harmony with Federal Homeland Security strategic objectives. Programs must be developed and delivered in a spirit of inclusiveness among the federal, state, local, public and private sectors. Programs must be designed to promote essential information sharing, unity of effort and a pervasive philosophy of “jointness.” Learning must be integrated into ongoing career development and professional training programs.

Principle 6: Make Education Modular: Programs must be based on a building-block approach that can be adapted to different audiences. All programs must be designed to acknowledge target audiences’ needs to balance breadth of knowledge objectives against the depth of knowledge needed for operational expertise.

Principle 7: Promote Innovation: Homeland Security studies must be designed to expand horizons, perceptions and to combat biases that inhibit creative, critical thinking. Programs are encouraged to incorporate new innovative approaches to problem solving. Programs should be designed to achieve resilient and adaptive patterns of thinking.